



A Whole New World by Pastor Alan Felton

Several years ago, I walked the path of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, an event we celebrate today on Palm Sunday. The route is a bit understated and can be traveled in just a few minutes. Yet, as we walked it and remembered the momentous events that happened there and the weight of those that would come later in Holy Week, the road felt incredibly long. It was as if we were traveling between two entirely different worlds as went from a place of celebration toward a way of sorrows.

Holy Week is a sort of transitional space that is unsettling through its many twists and turns. This week starts out with cries of "Hosanna!" welcoming Jesus and ends with shouts of "Crucify Him!" as he is condemned. One of the twelve, Judas, betrays Jesus for a pile of silver. His disciples, those he called friends at the Last Supper, abandon

him. Peter, perhaps the closest of all the disciples to Jesus, denies his Lord three times. Jesus is crucified and buried. These dramatic events happen in a relatively short amount of time, but the way the world is changed because of them is simply stunning.

I invite you to not rush through Holy Week but to experience its worship in meaningful ways. I know everyone is eager to reach Easter, but this week is filled with special moments of its own. Wave palms today as we go with Jesus into Jerusalem. Return on Holy Thursday for Jesus' last meal and his betrayal and arrest. Walk the Stations of the Cross and sit in the sanctuary as the darkness of Good Friday closes around you. Feel the cold silence of Saturday awaiting... wondering...what will happen on the third day? It just may be a whole new world!



Hallelujah Chorus

This Easter at the 11:00 a.m. service, the Benson Memorial Chancel Choir is thrilled to be performing the timeless Hallelujah chorus from Handel's Messiah, and we invite you to raise your voice with us! Whether you have sung this piece before or want to give it a try for the first time, you are welcome to sing with us. Everyone who is interested in singing Hallelujah with the choir is invited to practice the piece with us on Holy Thursday, April 6, at 6:15 p.m., just before the evening Holy Thursday service at 7:00 p.m. Music will be provided, and if you're too excited to wait, you can try singing along using [these YouTube tracks](#). We hope to see you there and to have you rejoice "Hallelujah!" with us this Easter Sunday!



BENSON MEMORIAL UMC
EASTER SERVICES
APRIL 9 // 8:45 & 11AM



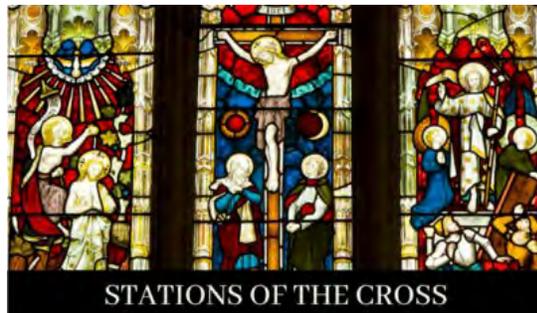
Palm/Passion Sunday | April 2
8:45 and 11am services in the sanctuary



Easter Egg Hunt | April 2
12-1pm in the courtyard and front lawn



Holy Thursday | April 6
12pm and 7pm services in the sanctuary



Stations of the Cross | April 7
self-guided 10am-2pm; guided tour at 3pm



Good Friday | April 7
7pm service in the sanctuary



Easter Sunday | April 9
8:45 and 11am services in the sanctuary

Invite your friends and family to our Holy Week events!

Celebrate Easter and Holy Week with us!
Visit bensonmemorialumc.org/easter/
for all the details.



Always be Inviting!

Easter is fast approaching, and we ask everyone to offer hospitality to and care for others by inviting them to church on Sunday, April 9. Stop by the office to pick up these invitation cards or get yours at church on Sunday. Use them to invite a friend or neighbor to come WITH YOU to church. Offer to pick them up and take them out to eat before or after the services for an extra-special invitation!

Easter Flower Cross

Spring flowers have come early this year, and we're hoping there will still be some in bloom for our flower cross on Easter Sunday. Our Easter flower cross is created on Easter Sunday using cut flowers and shrubbery cuttings provided by the congregation. These flowers can be from your yard, or you may purchase cut flowers from your favorite market.

Flowers can be dropped off at the church on Saturday or Easter morning.

All flowers should be dropped off under the breezeway by the entrance to the narthex. Containers of water will be available in this area for Saturday flower drop-offs. The Easter flower cross will be part of both the 8:45 and 11:00 a.m. services, so the earlier the flowers are provided, the better. Please help create this beautiful addition to our celebratory service.





Introducing Church Center

Your connection to the life of Benson Memorial UMC!

We are very excited to announce a new way to interact with Benson Memorial UMC. This month, we are switching to Planning Center as our church management software. With this new software, our church staff will gain an increased ability to communicate, schedule, generate reports, manage registrations and room reservations, share files, and more. One of the most exciting features of Planning Center is their phone app and their online portal for the congregation, called Church Center.

By accessing the Church Center phone app or online portal, you will be able to keep your personal information up to date, access our online church directory, and easily check in to worship services (either in-person or online) and other events. You will also be able to give to Benson Memorial by ACH transfer from your bank account, give using a credit or debit card, and even give by sending a text. Small group and Sunday School leaders will be able to take attendance, communicate with their groups, share resources and files, and so much more.

Thank you for your patience as we continue to migrate data from our old system to the new. And if you haven't logged into Church Center yet, please do. If you need assistance, we can help, too!

A Notice from our Business Manager

Many of you have received automated emails in the last week from the contribution management portal of our new Church Center software. I am working to set up our donor and account profiles right now. Please rest assured that no new contributions have been initiated on your behalf; I do not have the ability to do that at all. On Wednesday, March 22, I recorded operating pledges, joined donor profiles for married couples, and retroactively batch entered all contributions for the month of January. January will show on your donation history as 3/22/23 because that is the date of the first batch. I will be entering a single batch for the month of February next, and then will also do the same for the month of March. In April, the donations will be processed in the new system in real time. You will get some more automated emails as I batch enter these remaining months.

In the meantime, please log in to your Church Center profile and explore all of the directory and donation history capabilities available to you. If you are an online giver, you will need to set up your own online giving payment method and schedule your own payments. This system does not allow me to have any administrator rights which gives you, the giver, increased privacy and security.

Please let me know if you have any further questions or concerns,

Thank you,
Elizabeth Moy, Business Manager
businessmanager@bensonmemorialumc.org

[Go to our website to learn about Church Center.](#)
[Training videos and information are located in the FAQs.](#)



Have You Taken Control of Your Health Today?

Life Line Screening will be here at Benson Memorial United Methodist Church on Friday, May 5, offering safe, painless, non-invasive preventive health screenings that are typically not a part of a routine physical. To be more proactive about your health for yourself, your family and your community, please register for these health screenings today. Please refer to the attached flyer to get more info about how you can sign up.

There is no time like the present to take action!

Two ways to register:

- Call toll-free: 1-844-591-7160
- Online: <https://llsa.social/HC>

New Bible Studies This Easter Season!

Easter is a time of new beginnings, and that includes Bible study. We will offer two exciting new studies during the Easter season.

On Wednesdays at 6:45 p.m. (beginning April 19), join us for what is known as "participatory" Bible study. We will read various Bible texts fitting for the season from the perspective of the various

characters appearing in them. Participants will work through the texts in groups, listening for what God is saying, deepening their understanding, and preparing to take action based on what they have read and learned.

On Thursdays at 10 a.m. (beginning April 13), the study *What the Prayers of Jesus Tell Us About the*

Heart of God will be offered. This study, written by Shane Stanford, examines the prayers and practices of Jesus and provides insight into how he intended his disciples to live and how Jesus invites us to stay connected to God.

Both studies will be taught by Pastor Alan.

A Few Can Be Mighty

As part of their March meeting, the Susanna Wesley ladies collected items for York Elementary. When the school was asked if they needed any supplies, they indicated they could use more Kleenex, Clorex wipes, and ZipLock bags to help them through the end of the school year. Our Benson Memorial Susanna Wesley group were few in number at this month's meeting, but they and many members unable to attend the meeting were very generous in their donations. A full cart of supplies was delivered to York last week and we have received this thank-you note from the grateful school:

*Dear Louise and the
Wonderful Women's group,*

Thank you so much for the huge donation of supplies that you brought to York Elementary this week. We are all so thankful for everything and appreciate the community support. Bless your BIG and generous hearts! Thank you again!

*Suzanne Scott
York Elementary*



'Music Heals' Program

After many years of planning, praying, and waiting (due to the pandemic), our Outreach Team is thrilled to announce we are starting a music ministry at Nash Correctional Institution in Nashville, North Carolina.

Many studies have shown the positive effects that music has on not only our physical health but our mental health. Music is shown to lower blood pressure, reduce heart rate, reduce stress hormones, calm the nervous system, lower cortisol levels, and much more. Creating music has also been shown to release emotion, decrease anxiety, and improve overall mental health.

We have faith that this program will be healing and redemptive for the residents who choose to participate in it, allowing them to learn more about themselves, feel empowered, and engage their emotions in a safe and therapeutic environment.

How will the program work?

Benson Memorial will supply 12 beginning acoustic guitar kits which include everything necessary to learn how to play the guitar, including curricula. Each beginning course will last 10 weeks, with 12 residents on each rotation. Thanks to the help of the correctional programs supervisor, we have enlisted a resident who studied music theory to teach the course, and he's excited to get started! After the course is completed, those who have graduated will be able to continue to spend time playing.

How can you be a part of it?

Donations may be made by check or online. Please be sure to write "Nash Music Program" on the memo line. The donation period will go until May 1. Thank you for your support!



Thank You for All the Cards!

Thank you to everyone who took the time to create beautiful and encouraging cards for Springmoor residents. We received over 30 cards that will serve as loving reminders they are loved and prayed for. Thank you! —Cortney Babajtis

Benson Memorial family, I just want to thank you for the cards you made several weeks ago for the moms-to-be at the women's prison. I really cannot tell you how much the women appreciated them. They included beautiful illustrations and such caring, thoughtful messages. All together, these were wonderful gifts for the women to take back to the dormitory, words of encouragement to a group that so often feels forgotten. We on the Prison Ministry team are very honored that we could deliver them for you! For any more information, do contact me! —Pat Lee





UMCOR Providing Help to Those in Need

Vicious tornadoes recently caused wide destruction and tragic loss of life in Mississippi and other areas to our south. UMCOR is busy organizing relief efforts. If you would like to financially support the recovery work, use this link: <https://umcmmission.org/advance-project/901670/>. 100% of your gift goes directly to those in need of it.

Urgent Need for Ushers and Counters

There is an urgent need for volunteers to serve as ushers and counters. Volunteers are invited to serve on teams for both tasks. Ushers welcome people as they arrive for worship and help collect the weekly offering. Counters tabulate the weekly offering and ensure all money collected is properly accounted for and ready for deposit in the bank. **These are both critical tasks!** If you are interested in serving in either of these roles, please contact the [church office](#).

Preschool Silent Auction

Save the date! Benson Memorial Preschool is holding a silent auction on Monday, April 17, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Chow Pizza Bar, 8311 Creedmoor Road, Raleigh. Drop by and bid on your favorite auction items or grab a table and stay for dinner. Fun for the whole family! All auction proceeds directly benefit the preschool program. For more information, contact [Shannon Luxford](#).



Campus Clean-up Days

Come out for a morning of indoor and outdoor light maintenance and grounds cleanup involving power washing, leaf blowing, and other yardwork as needed. Our Spring dates are Saturdays, 9:00 a.m. to noon, April 22, and May 20. Contact [Jerry Crenshaw](#) to volunteer. Thank you!

New Staff Email Addresses

Our staff emails have all changed to a new, branded email address. Please use only the following addresses when contacting a member of our staff, and update these in your contact list.

- Alan Felton:** seniorpastor@bensonmemorialumc.org
- Cortney Babajtis:** outreach@bensonmemorialumc.org
- Martha Johnston:** office@bensonmemorialumc.org
- Elizabeth Moy:** businessmanager@bensonmemorialumc.org
- Anthony Roncolato:** musicdirector@bensonmemorialumc.org
- Shannon Luxford:** preschooldirector@bensonmemorialumc.org
- Clare Pope:** preschooloffice@bensonmemorialumc.org
- Trustee Chair:** trustees@bensonmemorialumc.org



Church Calendar

([complete church calendar is here](#))

Sunday, April 2

PALM-PASSION SUNDAY

- 8:45 a.m., Worship Service
- 9:45 a.m., Pathfinders Class
- 9:45 a.m., Benson Discussion Class
- 9:45 a.m., Bright Siders Class
- 9:45 a.m., Thrill Seekers Class
- 11:00 a.m., Worship Service
- 11:00 a.m., [Online Worship](#)
- 12:00 p.m., Chancel Chimes Choir
- 12:00 p.m., Easter Egg Hunt
- 3:00 p.m., Prayer Shawl Group

Wednesday, April 5

- 5:45 p.m., Wonderful Wednesday Churchwide Meal
- 6:45 p.m., Bible Study
- 7:00 p.m., High School Bible Study

Thursday, April 6

HOLY THURSDAY

- 10:00 a.m., Bible Study
- 12:00 p.m., Worship Service
- 5:00 p.m., Choir Rehearsal
- 7:00 p.m., Worship Service

Friday, April 7

GOOD FRIDAY

- 10:00 a.m., Stations of the Cross Self-guided Tour (through 2:00 p.m.)
- 3:00 p.m., Stations of the Cross Guided Tour
- 7:00 p.m., Worship Service

Sunday, April 9

EASTER SUNDAY

- 8:45 a.m., Worship Service
- 9:45 a.m., Pathfinders Class
- 9:45 a.m., Benson Discussion Class
- 9:45 a.m., Bright Siders Class
- 9:45 a.m., Thrill Seekers Class
- 11:00 a.m., Worship Service
- 11:00 a.m., [Online Worship](#)
- 12:00 p.m., Chancel Chimes Choir

DON'T LOOK BACK



Acting on our study of Bishop Will Willimon's book, *Don't Look Back*, and his observations during his visit with us last month, we are giving you opportunities to speak and listen to each other during our "Don't Look Back" churchwide gatherings. We will examine these six challenge areas:

Our identity

Clarity about your congregation's part in God's mission

Our needs and capabilities

Vision of where God wants you to go from where you are presently most comfortable

Intentional strategies for outreach

Strategies for overcoming introversion by reaching and serving the surrounding community

Evangelism

Tactics for reaching, integrating, and equipping new disciples

Our culture and processes

Simple and accelerated decision-making and ministry follow-through

Leadership

Active, resourceful leadership from the pastor as mission leader

YOU ARE INVITED! SAVE THE DATE!

Fellowship Hall | Wonderful Wednesday Meal Served

Wednesday, April 12, 6:45pm

*Change is all around but God's presence remains the same. Be encouraged!
"Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope
on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed" (1 Peter 1:13).*